



image

54 OCT DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN



CAPULLO
96

McFARLANE
BRIAN

image® COMICS PRESENTS: "RECONCILIATION"



Dedicated to:
Sherlee McFarlane

Spawn #53 Summary:

Al Simmons is returned to his demonic birthplace, the ninth plane of Hell, where he is tormented by a demon in the likeness of Wanda. When he realizes that Malebolgia has tricked him, he angrily destroys the demon and passes another of Malebolgia's tests. Malebolgia then enlightens Al as to his puppeted position when he again tries to bargain his soul to leave Wanda alone. The Malebolgia reminds him that he already owns him, but agrees to leave Wanda alone in exchange for Al's loyalty and servitude. As agreed, Spawn enters Terry's dreams where he jerks awake in sudden realization that Al is "alive".

FOR IMAGE COMICS
LARRY MARDER - Executive Director

SPAWN #54. Digital Edition. Published by IMAGE COMICS 1440 N. Harbor Boulevard, Suite 305, Fullerton, CA 92635. Spawn®, its logo and its symbol are Registered Trademarks 1996 of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All other related characters are Trademark™ and Copyright© 1996 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Todd McFarlane.

Director Of Creative Development: TERRY FITZGERALD
Graphics Coordinator: JULIA SIMMONS Editorial Coordinator: MELANIE SIMMONS

CHECK OUT THE SPAWN WEB SITE AT... <http://www.spawn.com>

story
TODD McFARLANE
pencils
GREG CAPULLO
inks
TODD McFARLANE
DANNY MIKI
copy editor & letters
TOM ORZECHOWSKI
color
BRIAN HABERLIN
DAN KEMP



image



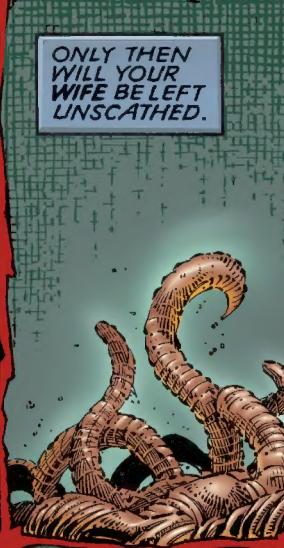
EMBRACE IT,
HE'D BEEN
TOLD.



LET IT BATHE
YOU IN ITS
SEDUCTIVE
CARESS.



ONLY THEN
WILL YOUR
EXISTENCE
MATTER.



ONLY THEN
WILL YOUR
WIFE BE LEFT
UNSCATHED.



SO DRINK IN
MAN'S SINS...



...AND ALL
HIS EVILS.



LET YOUR
NEW OUTER
FLESH GROW.



METAMORPHOSIZE.



ALLOWING
YOU TO
BECOME
THAT
WHICH YOU
MUST:



A SERVANT
OF HELL.



LIVING
PURELY ON
INSTINCTS.



WITH A
CRAVING
FOR
BLOOD.

THE HELLSPAWN, A DWELLER IN THE DARKEST OF NEW YORK CITY'S ALLEYWAYS, HAS BEEN GATHERING THE LEAVINGS OF THE PAST WEEK'S ACTIVITIES.

VICTIMS OF RANDOM MURDERS,
STILL UNSUSPECTED BY THE POLICE;

BODIES OF ENEMIES OF ORGANIZED CRIME,
DUMPED BY ANONYMOUS HITMEN;

WHORES,
KILLED AFTER THREATENING
TO LEAVE THEIR
PIMPS ONCE TOO OFTEN;

TOXICALLY OVERDOSED
DRUG ADDICTS;

SAD, STARVED DERELICTS;

GANG MEMBERS A LONG
WAY FROM HOME.

ALL MAKE THEIR WAY EVENTUALLY
TO 'RAT CITY'... OR AT LEAST THEIR
BODY PARTS DO... EVEN THOUGH
A CRIMSON SPECTRE HAS CLAIMED
A PORTION OF IT FOR HIMSELF.
NO MATTER. THE KILLINGS AND
DUMPINGS CONTINUE.

THIS CLOAKED BEING,
HIMSELF NO STRANGER
TO EVIL'S BLACK
EMBRACE, THEN GOES
ABOUT COLLECTING
THE DEBRIS.



SO THAT SHE
WILL REMAIN
UNTainted.

I CAN'T BE
WRONG ABOUT
THIS. THE
DREAMS WERE
SO VIVID.

HIS CORRUPTION.
HER PURITY.

AND SO,
IGNORANT OF SPAWN'S
ORIGIN, TERRY'S
MIND SPINS
RELENTLESSLY WITH
QUESTIONS.

AND
WHY IN
GOD'S NAME
WOULD
HE FAKE
HIS OWN
DEATH?

THEN, FOR
SOME REASON,
HE BECOMES
ACUTELY
AWARE OF
HIS SUR-
ROUNDINGS.

HERE THE
SHADOWS
KEEP THEIR
SECRETS.



BUT IF IT
IS HIM, WHERE'S
HE BEEN ALL
THESE YEARS?
WHY'S HE
HIDING?



AS HE FORGES DEEP INTO THE LABYRINTHINE ALLEY, HIS ANXIETY BUILDS.

HE NEEDS A DISTRACTION.

SO, HE MAKES THAT WHICH HE FEARS INTO HIS TARGET.

MY GOD! LOOK AT THEM ALL. I CAN'T BELIEVE NONE OF THESE GUYS CAN GET A JOB, EVEN SCRUBBING FLOORS.

AT LEAST THEY'D HAVE SOME DIGNITY.

HE'S MORE COMFORTABLE NOW. FINDING FAULT IN OTHERS HAS ALWAYS GOTTEN US PAST OUR OWN INADEQUACIES.

MINUTES LATER, METHODIC FOOTSTEPS SHATTER TERRY'S BRIEF TRANQUILITY.

W-WHO'S THERE...!?

SHOW YOURSELF.

YOU'RE ON OUR TURF, HOMIE. WE DON'T LIKE 'REAL' PEOPLE MESSIN' WITH OUR SPACE.

SO YOU'D BETTER HAVE A DAMN GOOD REASON WHY I SHOULDN'T BUST YOUR HEAD OPEN.

I'M JUST TRYING TO FIND SOMEONE.

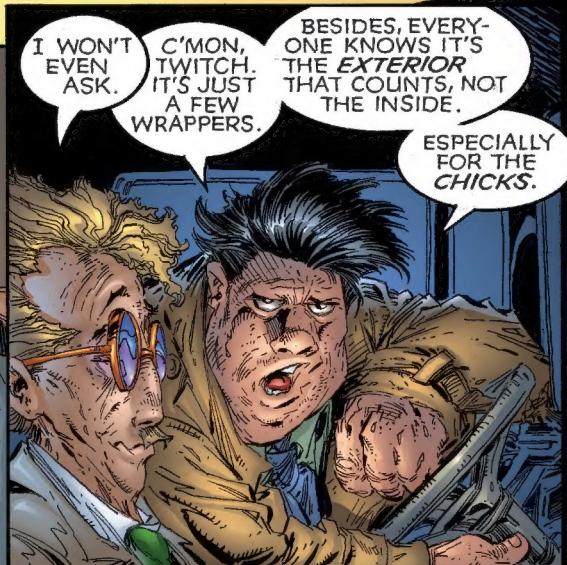
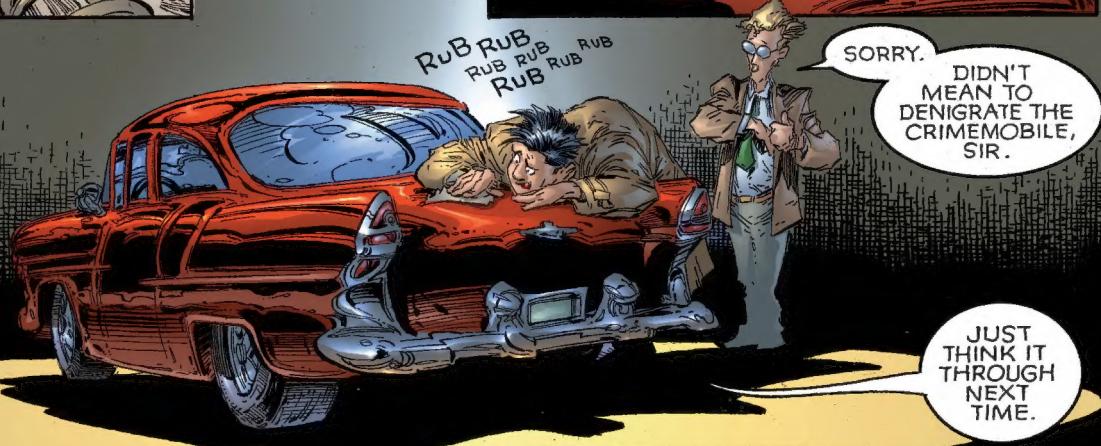
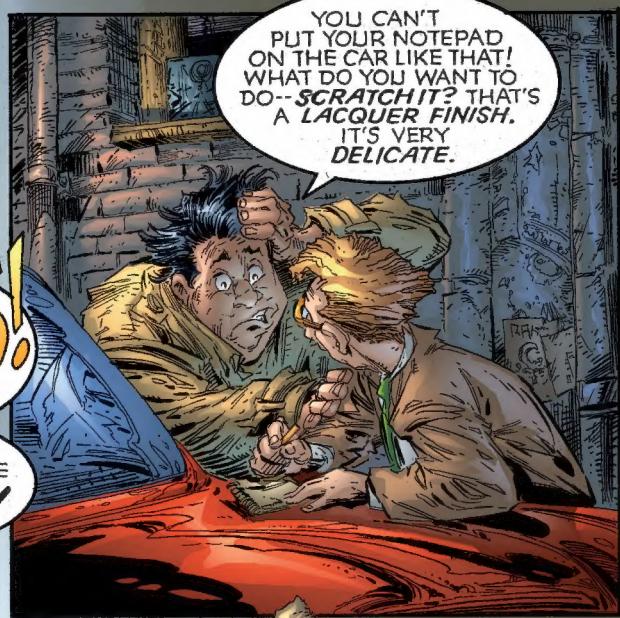
A FRIEND.

YOU AIN'T GOT NO FRIENDS AROUND HERE. PEOPLE COME HERE TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM CRAP LIKE YOU.

NOW PULL OUT YOUR WALLET AND FACE THE WALL.



A MOMENT.
SAM HAD TURNED HIS BACK FOR ONLY ONE FLEETING MOMENT.



LATER THAT NIGHT...



--IN SPORADIC GUSTS, STARK WINDS SNAKE THROUGH INTRICATE BRANCHES OF THE HIDDEN BOWERY--

--WINDS CHANNELED TO FAN AN OPEN FIRE, STOKED WELL TO CONSUME THE TRINKETS WHICH BIND AN AURA OF UGLINESS TO THOSE DWELLING IN THE BACK STREETS.

--SEEMINGLY SUCKED INTO THE DARKNESS BY AN UNSEEN FORCE--

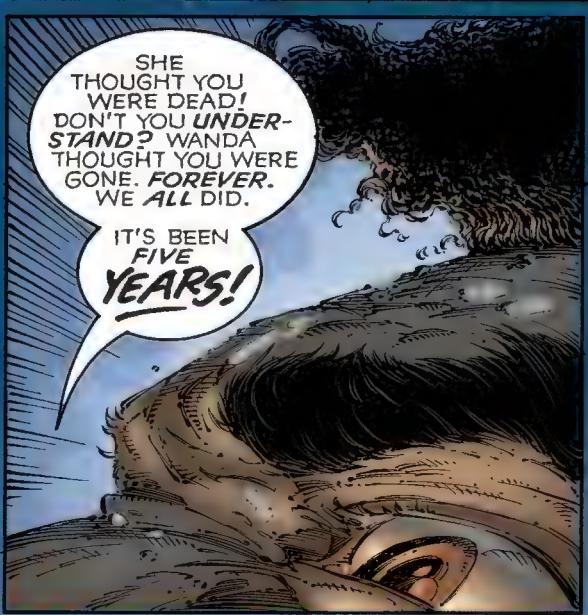
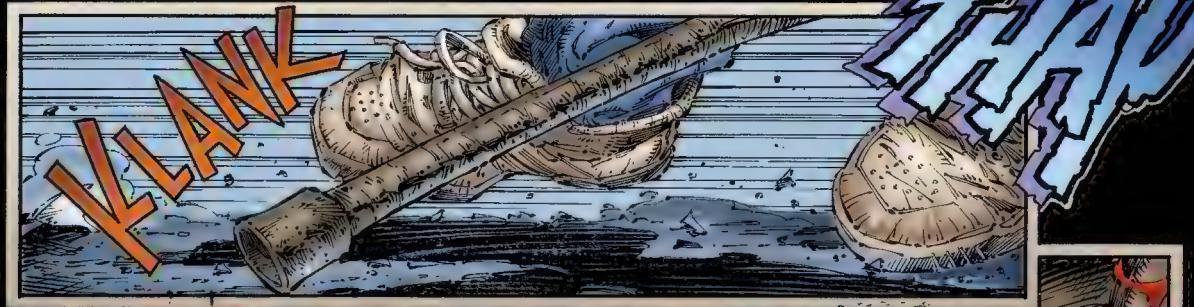
MONEY. STOLEN GOODS. DRUGS. THE LIFELOOD OF ANY CORRUPTED SUB-CULTURE.

THESE ARE THE WORTHLESS OBJECTS THAT HAVE DRAWN THEM ALL TO THEIR FATE--

--MADE THEM BEACONS TO THE CREATURE CLOAKED IN BLOOD RED.

GOD HAVE MERCY.





SO THAT GIVES YOU THE
RIGHT TO SCREW MY

WIFE!

C-CAN'T YOU HEAR?
SHE BURIED YOU. WATCHED
THEM PUT YOU IN THE GROUND.
IT DEVASTATED HER, LOSING YOU.
SHE WAS IN PAIN.
SHE NEEDED TO GET THROUGH IT.

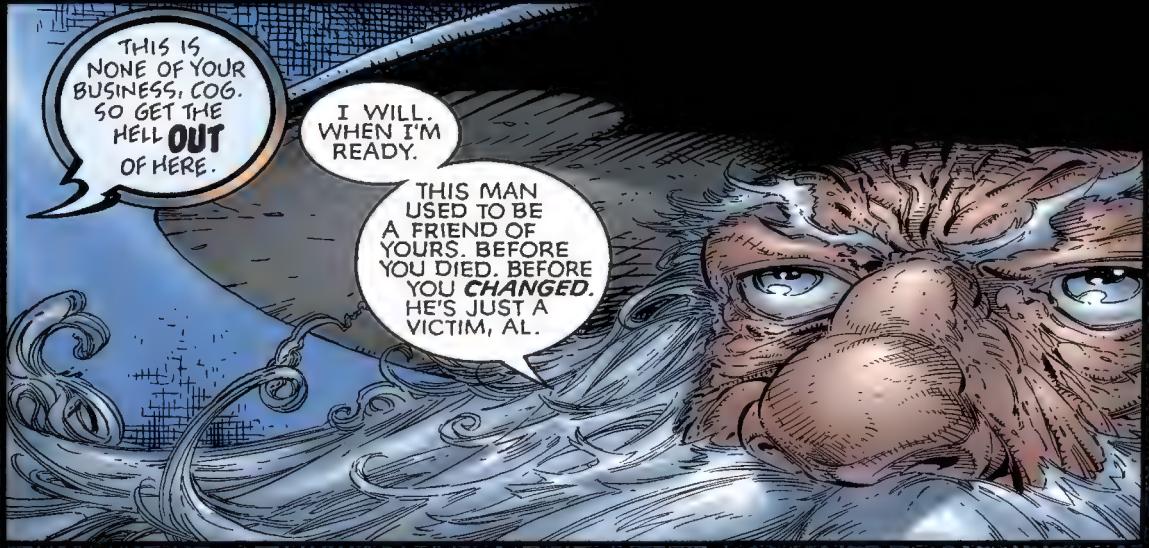
I WAS TRYING TO DO WHAT I
THOUGHT YOU'D WANT FROM ME.
FALLING IN LOVE
WASN'T PART OF THE PLAN.

THEN WHAT WAS? HAVING
ME KILLED? WHY DID WYNN GIVE THE
ORDER TO TERMINATE ME?
YOU WERE MY FRIEND, GODDAMIT.
NOW, YOU'RE DEFENDING THAT SONOVABITCH.

FIRST
MY LIFE!
THEN WANDA!
I SHOULD KILL
YOU RIGHT
NOW!

YOU'RE
WRONG! YOUR
DYING HAS
NOTHING TO DO
WITH WANDA.
SHE'S INNOCENT
OF ALL THIS...
YOU, WYNN, MY
FRAME-UP... IT'S
DESTROYING
HER.

HE'S
RIGHT,
AL.



THIS IS
NONE OF YOUR
BUSINESS, COG.
SO GET THE
HELL OUT
OF HERE.

I WILL.
WHEN I'M
READY.

THIS MAN
USED TO BE
A FRIEND OF
YOURS. BEFORE
YOU DIED. BEFORE
YOU CHANGED.
HE'S JUST A
VICTIM, AL.



AND IT'S
ALL BECAUSE
OF YOU. YOUR
ACTIONS. HE'S
NOW LIVING A
LIE HOPING THAT
SOME DAY HE'LL
FIND THE
TRUTH.



YOU DON'T
KNOW US,
COG. OR WHAT
THIS IS
ABOUT.

BUT HE
DOES.



SO ASK
HIM. THEN
DO YOUR
KILLING.



SOMETHING
YOU SEEM TO
HAVE A HARD
TIME ACCEPTING
THESE DAYS.

ASK!



I DON'T HAVE TO--
BECAUSE THERE
ISN'T AN
ANSWER GOOD
ENOUGH!

NOTHING'S
GOING TO
EXCUSE HIS
BETRAYAL--OR
WHAT HE
TOOK FROM
ME!

LOOK
AT ME,
TERRY. LOOK
WHAT YOU
HELPED HELL
TO CREATE!

A
MONSTER!

DO YOU
KNOW WHAT
THAT MEANS?!
TO NOT BE A MAN
ANYMORE. TO BE SO
DISGUSTING TO LOOK
AT THAT MY OWN
WIFE DOESN'T
RECOGNIZE
ME!

DO YOU
UNDERSTAND THAT?!
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE
YOUR WIFE RECOIL IN
FEAR AT THE MERE
SIGHT OF YOU?

TO KNOW
SHE'S SLEEPING
NAKED NEXT TO
ANOTHER
MAN?

I'VE WATCHED
YOU, TERRY. SEEN
HOW WANDA
LOVES YOU. THE
WAY SHE LOOKS
AT YOU.

THAT
SHOULD
BE ME!
NOT YOU,
DAMMIT!
ME!!

YOU'VE GOT
EVERYTHING.
HER LOVE.
HER DEVOTION.
HER CHILD!
I'VE GOT
NOTHING!

I
DID!!

CAN'T YOU
SEE?! I'M LIKE
THIS BECAUSE
I'M DEAD!
HE USED ME!
AND MY LOVE FOR
WANDA, TURNED
IT ALL INTO
SOME WAKING
NIGHTMARE.

SHE
THOUGHT
YOU'D
DIED...+

HELL AND
ITS DEVILS MOCK
ALL WE HOLD DEAR.
HUMANS ARE A
COMMODITY, LURED
INTO DAMNATION
BY THEIR OWN
WEAKNESS.

THEY FOUND
MINE-- WANDA.
NOW, TO KEEP HER
PURE, I HAVE TO BE
THEIR ASSASSIN. A
KILLER FOR THEIR
UNHOLY WAR.

FUNNY,
ISN'T IT? I'M
DOING THE SAME
JOB FOR HELL THAT
I DID FOR WYNN.
AND NOW YOU
DEFEND HIM.

NEEDING ANSWERS,
SPAWN RELEASES
HIS GRIP.

WHY, TERRY?
HOW CAN YOU
POSSIBLY
JUSTIFY YOUR
INVOLVEMENT
WITH WYNN?

HE SET
ME UP, AL.
FRAMED ME.
I STILL DON'T
KNOW HOW OR
EVEN WHY.
BUT IT WAS
WYNN.

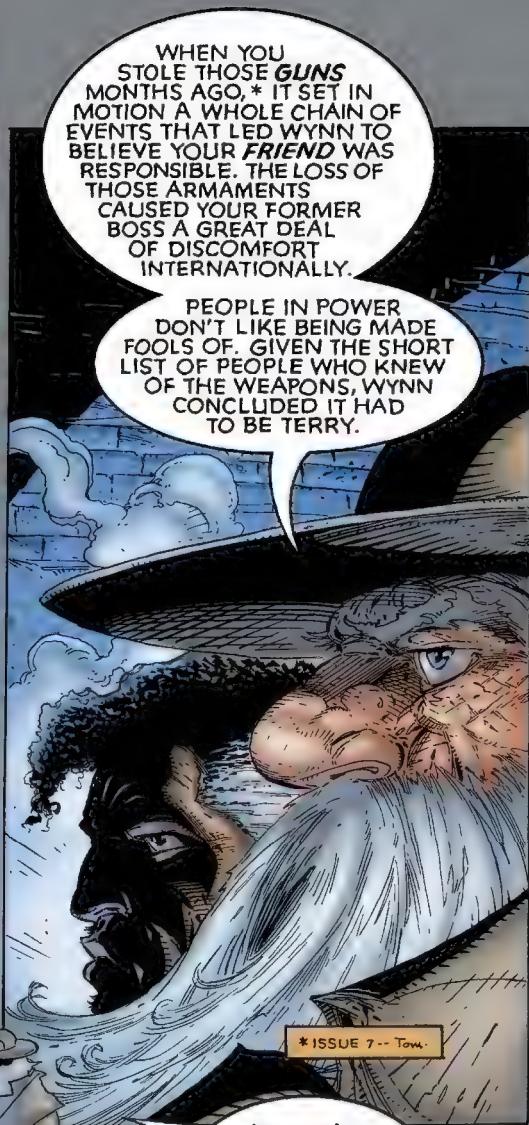
AND THE ONLY
WAY I COULD THINK
TO NAIL HIM WAS TO
GET CLOSE-- WATCH HIM
MYSELF AND HOPE HE
TRIPPED UP SOMEPLACE.
SO I TOOK A JOB WITH
HIM. NOT TO BE HIS
CONFIDANT. OR HIS
ADVISOR. OR
HIS SHIELD.

I TOOK THE
JOB SO I COULD
BURY THE SCUMBAG.
PURE AND SIMPLE.

SINCE
WHEN DID
YOU BECOME
SUCH A
TOUGH
GUY?

LOOK!
YOU KEEP
TALKING ABOUT
YOUR DEVILS.
WELL, I'VE GOT
ONE TOO, ONLY
MINE'S IN
HUMAN
FORM.

AND HE'S
MESSING
WITH MY
FAMILY.

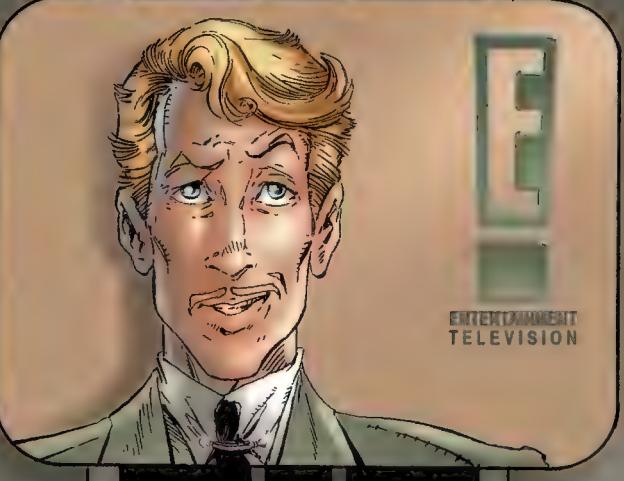




IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY HAS ARRESTED A PAIR OF MAJOR COCAINE IMPORTERS. NORVIN BLANDON AND DANILO MENESES, TWO COLUMBIAN NATIONALS, ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE DISTRIBUTED SEVERAL TONS OF COCAINE THROUGH BAY AREA STREET GANGS.

PROFITS ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN FUNNELLED TO A GUERRILLA ARMY WHOSE LEADERS WERE GRADUATES OF THE C.I.A.-RUN "SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS." BOTH MENESSES AND BLANDON HAD BEEN EMPLOYED BY THE C.I.A. AS CIVILIAN LEADERS OF ANTI-COMMUNIST MILITIAS. THE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE IS INVESTIGATING ANY POSSIBLE LINKS THERE, AS WELL AS WITH PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN TURKEY AND IRELAND, ACCORDING TO AN UNNAMED STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCE.

THE PAIR HAD FALLEN INTO DISFAVOR WITH THEIR COLUMBIAN SUPPLIERS OVER UNPAID DEBTS, ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE.



NOTED DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER DUNCAN LEVIN, JUST BACK FROM NORTHERN IRELAND, IS FURIOUS WITH THE EMBASSY THERE. HIS FILM CREW, PERMITS IN HAND, WERE DENIED ACCESS TO A REMOTE VILLAGE NEAR THE CITY OF HEMTORG, AS THEY PRESSED THE ISSUE, THEY WERE 'REMOVED' BY LOCALS. WHEN LEVIN BROUGHT THE MATTER TO THE EMBASSY, THE U.S. AMBASSADOR SUPPORTED THE ACTIONS OF THE LOCALS.

LEVIN SUSPECTS THE EMBASSY WAS PRESSURED BY THE C.I.A. DUE TO REBEL ACTIVITY IN THE AREA. THIS IS BORNE OUT BY EMBASSY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT, "FOR POLITICAL REASONS," THE PROJECT BE "REWORKED" FOR FILMING IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY.

ON A SADDER NOTE, I REGRET TO REPORT THE DEATH OF HAROLD CASE, A VETERAN INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER WITH NBC. HE WAS ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT IN ISTANBUL WHEN HE DIED IN A TRAGIC CAR ACCIDENT. HE WAS 61.



REGULAR VIEWERS KNOW MY FEELINGS ABOUT THE C.I.A.--HOW I'VE BEGGED AND PLEADED WITH OUR GOVERNMENT TO PUT A LEASH ON THEM. THE AGENCY'S BLATANT MANIPULATION OF OUR OVERSEAS INTERESTS WILL HAVE REPERCUSSIONS WELL INTO OUR GRANDKIDS' LIFETIMES, ASSUMING THEY LIVE SO LONG AND EVEN HEAR ABOUT IT. THE BIGGEST CRISIS OF ALL IS THAT OUR EVER-DWINDLING CABAL OF MEDIA OUTLETS FOLLOWS THEIR LEAD IN THE SHIFTING PRIORITIES OF INTELLIGENCE GATHERING.

IN OTHER WORDS, OUR SPIES KEEP SWITCHING ENEMIES. IT'S AS THOUGH THEY'RE BEING LED BY A RING THROUGH THEIR SPECIAL INTERESTS. POLITICAL? MILITARY? WHAT DAY IS THIS?

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT NATIONAL SECRETS ARE BEING BOUGHT AND SOLD LIKE SOME CHEAP WATCH IN A PAWN SHOP. MY PROBLEM IS THAT THE PAWN SHOP KEEPS CHANGING MANAGEMENT.

LOOK, I'M SORRY THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT LIKE THEY SHOULD HAVE, BUT THEY NEEDED ME TO FINISH UP AN ANALYSIS I'VE BEEN WORKING ON.

TELL GRANNY I'LL SEE HER NEXT WEEK.

IT'S NOT HER I'M CONCERNED WITH. IT'S YOU, AND YOUR LONG HOURS.

I'LL BE FINE. AS SOON AS I CAN I'LL BE OUT OF HERE, OKAY.

I LOVE YOU, WANDA.

I LOVE YOU, TOO.

SMALL LIES ARE WHAT HE GIVES HER, NOT YET READY TO TELL HER THE TRUTH FOR FEAR IT MIGHT HURT HER.

C'MON, AL, WHERE ARE YOU?

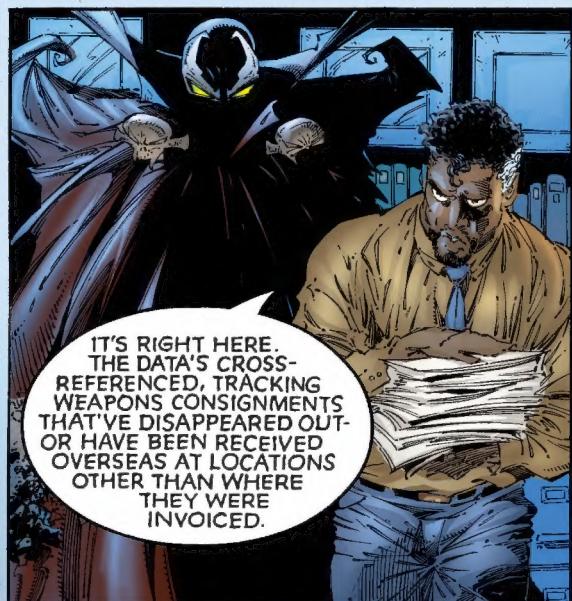
TIME SLIPS AWAY AS TERRY CONTINUES TO ORGANIZE HIS EVIDENCE.

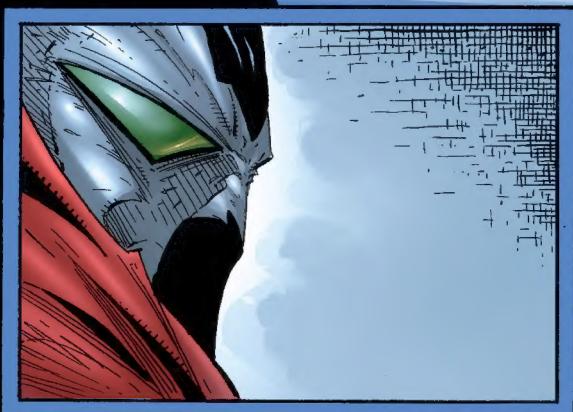
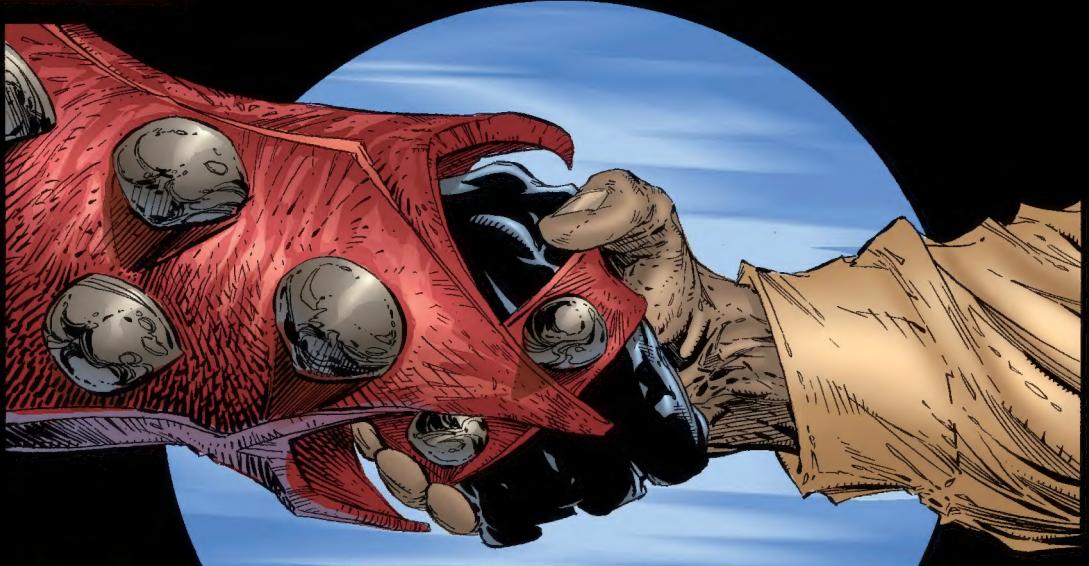
THUD

uh?

JESUS! HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE? HOW'D YOU GET IN?

IT DOESN'T MATTER. SHOW ME WHAT YOU NEED TO.









EMPIRE

Tyrant
Lizard
King